

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Wilma Mankiller, Activist



People say that crisis changes people and turns ordinary people into wiser or more responsible ones.

1 Wilma Mankiller was an activist who worked to improve the lives of Native Americans. An activist is a person who works to make changes in society.

2 Wilma Mankiller was born in 1945. She grew up in Oklahoma. The family home had no electricity or indoor plumbing. In 1956 the family relocated to California hoping to improve their lives. However, the family continued to struggle due to finances and discrimination.

3 After finishing high school, Wilma attended college. She went to Skyline College, San Francisco State University, and graduated from Flaming Rainbow University. She majored in social sciences.

4 Wilma realized that Native Americans were struggling. She wanted to make their lives better. So she began working for the Cherokee Indian Nation Government as a tribal planner and program developer. She founded the Community Development Department for the Cherokee Nation.

This department worked to improve housing and water systems.

5 In 1985 Wilma Mankiller became the first female principal chief of the Cherokee Nation. She held this position for ten years. During her time as the principal chief, Wilma doubled the employment within the Cherokee Nation. She also developed new housing, health centers, and children's programs. Educational achievement also increased. During this time, Wilma Mankiller also wrote a book called, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*,

6 In 1995 Wilma Mankiller stepped down from her position as the principal chief due to health issues. She continued to be a voice for Native American people. In 1998 she was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton. This is the nation's highest award for a non-military citizen.

7 Wilma Mankiller died in 2010.

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1. Explain how paragraphs 2 and 4 are related to each other.

2. Education was important to Wilma Mankiller. What two details from the article support this fact?

3. Read the following passage. What can you infer about Wilma's character?

During her time as the principal chief, Wilma doubled the employment within the Cherokee Nation. She also developed new housing, health centers, and children's programs. Educational achievement also increased.

4. Summarize Wilma's life in one sentence.
